

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



Rhode Island Chapter

Testimony in Support of H-5678
House Finance Committee

April 7, 2021

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the Committee,

The Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics would like to offer full support for the Rhode Island Child Care is Essential Act (H-5672) which outlines a strategy for improving access for low income families to affordable, high quality childcare.

As pediatricians in Rhode Island, we value the importance of Childcare and Early Childhood Education. Social interactions with caregivers impact the developing infant's and young child's rapidly growing brain, and positive interactions set the stage for ongoing development and future academic success. As Rhode Island works to get back to full employment as we emerge from the COVID 19 pandemic, families will require child care for children across age groups and developmental stages. However, the cost of high quality child care is a barrier for many low income families. Limited access to affordable programs perpetuates social, academic, and health disparities for children and families. By providing families and childcare centers with financial support, the Child Care Assistance Program allows parents to return to work confident that the social, emotional, and physical needs of their child or children will be met in a supportive, nurturing childcare setting. Increasing funding to centers will allow them to hire and retain qualified providers, many of whom struggle to pay their own bills or even afford childcare in the centers which employ them.

Research has repeatedly shown high quality early childhood education has positive outcomes not only for individual children but for communities. Participants in high quality programs have higher graduation rates, decreased rates of arrest and incarceration, and increased participation in the local workforce. Given these measurable outcomes, it is critical that high quality programs be available, accessible, and affordable for all infants and young children in Rhode Island. S-378 will improve access to high quality care for low income families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "AW Brindle".

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gregory Fox".

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